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BRITISH UNIMA

BRITISH UNIMA CENTRE BULLETIN

EDITOR - ROBERT FOWLER

NOVEMBER 1997 NO 96

Editorial

There is a lot in this *Bulletin*, so I'll not take up undue space here.

First, Robin Linklater describes Wasa Marionettopera's appearance at the Northlands Festival in this issue. How many readers knew of it? Few, I suspect. Just as I, living in Reading, only found out by chance a couple of days in advance that the Düsseldorfer Marionetten-Theater would be performing here – for one day only – as part of a twinning festival. I saw Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*), which was excellent in every aspect from manipulation, quality of the puppets (an especially splendid dragon, which the plot, unfortunately, requires to be dispatched far too early), set, lighting, sound effects, and music. But, of course, there was no opportunity to give it publicity. All one could do was congratulate Anton Bachleitner's company afterwards and ask that they inform us well in advance of any further trip they make here. In other words, if you are aware of some foreign company bound for this isle which you feel is unlikely to be well publicized, let us or one of the other organizations know. One of us may have a publication date which will enable information to be put out. Sometimes, as with a recent Pulcinella "raid" by Bruno Leone, in September, there is hardly any warning given at all, but even then word of mouth may enable a few more seats to be filled if the "clearing house" of one of the organizations is informed. It is a shame when work, particularly good work, is denied an audience.

Second, it goes without saying that you keep your eyes open for puppetry when you are abroad, but do also keep your notebooks busy. Remember that even a few brief observations on what you see, particularly in the remoter parts of the world, could well be of interest to the membership.

Third, in case you think we have gone font-happy, we have. We recently installed some new software and have been trying out foreign scripts on rather an "if you've got it, flaunt it" principle. We'll no doubt ladle the alphabet soup out more sparingly in future.

And, finally, an (early) Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all members from the Committee, with, from Ray and me, especial thanks to all those who have contributed to the *Newsletter* and *Bulletin* this year. May there be even more of you next.

Members

New members are:

Garlic Theatre, Norwich: Iklooshar Malara and Mark Pitman. Professional puppeteers, mime, mask work, and mask making.

Pixton Puppets: Forest Row, Sussex: Heather Goodwin. Educational (amateur).

Indefinite Articles, Cambridge: Steve Tiplady. Professional puppeteer; interests – visual arts, cricket.

Martin MacGilp has a *new address*: 10 Cullernie Gardens, Balloch, Inverness,

Non-Ex Cathedra Remarks

Ray DaSilva

Our Member of Honour George Speaight has made an enormous contribution to the knowledge of puppet theatre – there is yet another example in this *Bulletin*. It is therefore a great pleasure as a "thank you" to George and as a seasonal gift to you, to include a copy of his latest work, *The Earliest English Puppet Play?* with this issue.

This new publication is another reward of the closer cooperation of The British Puppet & Model Theatre Guild, The Puppet Centre Trust and BrUNIMA. Although published under the DaSilva imprint, it was the agreement of all three national organizations to purchase copies for their subscribers which made it financially feasible.

We are very grateful to George for rendering the *Interludium* from a Northumbrian dialect of Middle English to a text which we can more easily understand, and for his conclusion to the piece. All we need now is someone to perform it.

It was a great pleasure to attend a special gathering of The British Puppet & Model Theatre Guild on October 12 to honour Gordon Shapley, who is now living with his daughter at Three Holes, near Wisbech. Gordon was our Honorary Treasurer for many years and was made an honorary life member of BrUNIMA just over a year ago.

Newsletter News

The Committee were pleasantly surprised to receive three enthusiastic offers to take on the voluntary job of Editor of our *Newsletter* (issued alternately with the *Bulletin*) and are pleased to announce the acceptance of the joint offer from Helen Fry and Mark Dobson. Mark and Helen run their own company *Ruffege* and have recently commenced touring *The Three Golden Hairs* which they expect to be performing at California State University next year. Mark is a computer whiz, and Helen is currently researching

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1997 Subscriptions

You should receive an invoice with this Bulletin showing next year's subscription with discount if paid by December 31 1997. Please note that our Membership Secretary will not be sending reminders, so don't miss out

Exeter Magic

John Furse

Nothing new perhaps to those in the know, but for those distanced from Covent Garden's Theatre Museum, Bethnal Green's Museum of Childhood, and the Puppet Centre Trust, *MAGIC MOVEMENTS: The World of Puppets, Past and Present* (Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, 2 August – 15 October) proved a real eye-opener. Keeper of Decorative Art John Madin managed to strike a happy balance between informative showcase display and out-in-the-open activity, and what was on offer looked and sounded good.

A constant stream of visitors of all ages clearly relished the opportunity for behind-the-scene revelations, and the educational programme – coordinated by Julia Grant – was quite exceptional. Lectures, performances, and all sorts of antics: "Puppets Party Package. The perfect treat for children: Spend the afternoon at the Royal Albert Museum. Tickets include entry to afternoon puppet activity, a special tea party in the Consort cafe and an exciting goody bag from Albert's Gift Shop to take home." "Make a simple puppet with materials provided, become a puppeteer and watch yourself on video" – what more can you ask? See for yourself what once-upon-a-time was – learn and *do*.

TV favourites such as Muffin the Mule, Thunderbirds, the Muppets, and Splitting Image – a somewhat different Hugh Grant than Exeter folk saw in *Sense and Sensibility*, filmed locally and at Saltram House, and a proven reason for an increase in County-wide tourism. But the exhibition also put its seven-league boots on, taking Java, China, and Japan within its stride. And when I said "sounded good," I did not just mean the hubbub of appreciative younger visitors, but also the five video screens emitting sounds and images ranging from Punch and Judy to Vietnamese water puppets via Bunraku. The case of Schichtl trick puppets with the Guild's instructive video playing alongside was an excellent idea. Splendid, too, to see Benjamin Haydon's large *Punch or May Day* (1829) from the Tate, though you had to imagine the sound of the crowd there.

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum attracts the tourist trade, and many an out-of-towner was also captivated by Magic Movements. Slick marketing ploys led to plenty of publicity, though, sadly, there was no catalogue. John Madin and his team got it right. This was a fascinating exhibition which will have stimulated true excitement in many minds *and hands* and do nothing but good for the world of creators of make-believe. All concerned with the promotion of the exhibition deserve credit.

I said at the beginning that the items came from established public institutions (eg Brighton Royal Pavilion Art Gallery) or private collections (John Blundall – puppets, puppet-related material, including graphics), but such are the restrictions of display space nowadays that you would not necessarily see, say, all of the exhibits loaned by Bethnal Green were you to go to the East End, and so even the avid exhibition-goer would have seen something new, as well as making reacquaintance with some old favourites.

Belgian Roundup

The *Bulletin* has already carried a number of articles on our trip, but I thought I would add a few magpie details and tie up a few loose ends. The Tchantchès Museum contains 129 puppets by the puppetmaker and puppeteer Denis Bisscheroux (Bischeroux), which are a wonder to behold at close range, but also – and most importantly – look good as well as handling well on stage. We were, by the way, during one of our coach trips, able to watch a fascinating black-and-white film (1956) of him carving and performing – as I recall, kids paid 2 francs to watch a show. He was a cabinetmaker by trade, but that, of course, does not necessarily make you feel qualified to carve your own puppets – Georges Vetters, for example, who is also a

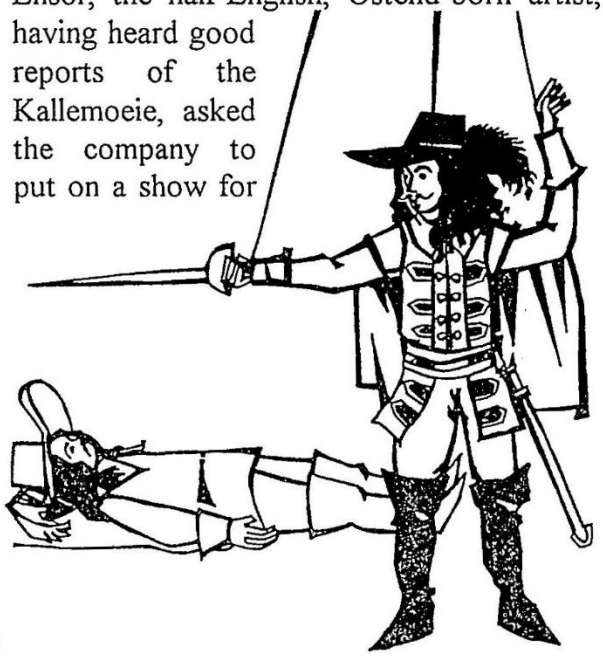
cabinetmaker, prefers to have his carved by Claude Deletrez, a master-glassmaker, as it happens. However, the puppets at the museum are not just for display, they work for their living – a selection is made from them according to the requirements of the play.

All the plays feature Charlemagne, but they gladly embrace anachronism, of which Tchantchès himself is the prime example. New plays are always being written. I noticed at the museum an excellent St Lambert, carved by Didier Balsaux, and learned that a play marking the 1,300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Liège's patron saint had been written and performed at the theatre a couple of years ago. A made-to-measure playlet was even written especially for our visit by Jean-Claude Maggi. Tchantchès loves puns and this began with the very title *La Guerre des trois n'aura pas lieu/The War of the Three Will Not Take Place*, adapting Giraudoux' *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu/The Trojan War...*, save it is rather lost on an audience which knows it, if at all, by its English title, *Tiger at the Gates*. Any explanation of humour tends to come across as leaden, but such linguistic stuff is the staff of life of many kinds of theatre, particularly popular theatre, and is a dimension in foreign theatre which tends to be underrated.

You will know from previous reports that we ate and drank very well in Belgium. At the Tchantchès Museum you can drink Péket (a kind of gin which is the favourite tipple of Tchantchès and miners), but most Belgian puppet theatres have a bar where you can drink spirits or a wide selection of beers, including the distinctive lambic-based Gueuze, traditional flavours of which are cherry and raspberry. But is there not a marketing opportunity lost in, say, the Toone Theatre, not offering a dark variety labelled Karagueuze?

Like the idea of the Francophone section choosing a member of the Flemish section to perform at its AGM – it neatly avoids any accusations of in-house favouritism. This year it was Karel van Ransbeeck of De Spiegel Theatre. I remember that the show, *Les Trois Amis/Dikke Vrienden* (performed in French, although many of the puppeteers appeared to be bilingual), was particularly enjoyed by Percy Press. Percy knew well Françoise Ancion, who, you will be aware, has also recently died. I did not know the latter, although I do know that John Phillips has a high opinion of Al Botroûle, which she and her husband, Jacques, ran, but I'll certainly miss bumping into Percy – whether it be at Charleville, Covent Garden, Birmingham, or Budapest – and receiving those friendly letters about his travels. How could you not admire him going to give his first performance at a "rave" just a couple of years ago? We have had Parachute Theatre's *Punk and Judy*, perhaps Percy gave us the first Punch of the E generation?

You will recall that Ted Beresford wrote (in the March issue) about a very large cache of puppets discovered in an Ostend church (The Church of the Holy Blood, by the way, not the Sacred Heart – editor's mistake). The promised translations of the Kallemoeie Theatre programmes are now available. I may include further information later, but, for the moment, I thought I would mention the following, on a purely topical, anecdotal note, given that *Theatre of Masks*, an exhibition of the paintings of James Ensor is on at the Barbican until 14 December. Ensor, the half-English, Ostend-born artist, having heard good reports of the Kallemoeie, asked the company to put on a show for



Toone at Brussels from *Ames de Chiffons* by Leo Dustin

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him and his closest friends from the art world in the Kerlings Hall on Wapenplein (Ostend): "The performance was staged for a select audience at the end of December 1929 and after the show Ensor paid public tribute to the players for their artistic playing and excellent staging. He was particularly struck by the exceptionally artistic puppets. Many photographs of this event were shown in magazines and newspapers at the time – all taken by the well-known photographer Antony." (from an article "The Resurrection of Kallemoeie," which appeared in *De Zeewacht,* 19/12/58). There are a handful of puppet plays about Ensor, including one written by John Furse, a dozen years ago, called *Fridolin Unmasked: an incident in the life of James Ensor. A play for marionettes.*

I particularly liked the wooden figures (illustrated in *Animations* No 5 June/July) carved for the production of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the Mechels Stadspoppentheater (Mechelen Municipal Puppet Theatre). The production was directed by Karel Brožek, designed by Paul Contryn, and choreographed by Jiri Ouřada; the figures were carved by Jaroslav Doležal. Paul told me that he did not design them to be made of wood, which was Brožek's idea/insistence, and that this made them heavy and not easy to manipulate. However, they looked marvellous even when handled in the "cold" conditions of the storeroom. Three pages of text giving further details, translated from the *Carmina Burana* programme, are available.

I should like to take the opportunity here to thank very much John Pelling (who is not a member) for translating pieces from Dutch, and Freek Neirynck for his swiftly delivered expert advice on linguistic and puppet matters relating to Belgium.

It is also worth saying that our puppetry tour covered only some of the ground in Belgium, not getting, for example – our time was short – to either Ghent or Antwerp. But there will be other opportunities. The September issue of *D'Un Castelet à l'Autre*, the periodical of the Francophone section of Belgian UNIMA, carries the provisonal programme for the Belgians' visit here (6-10 May inclusive), when we will be doing our best to return the warm welcome we received. I can't wait to see again those rows of hanging figures, waiting for Frankensteins to jolt them back to life.

A few weeks after the Belgian trip I was in Paris' Musée nationale des arts et traditions populaires. On the ground floor there are still puppets to see, including, for example, a wonderful Polichinelle from the Théâtre Anatole, dating from the second half of the 19th century, although the Ubu head made by Jarry is still absent (as it has been for about the last five years!), and there are static, unfortunately, audiovisual puppet displays, but the bulk of the puppet collection, located on the ground floor, had been removed for an Astérix exhibition (the museum, like so many others, is desperately short of funds, and it was hoped this would be a money-spinning venture). I could get no information as to when or if the puppets would be redisplayed. This decision effectively renders off limits the majority of the items described in the museum's excellent little ethnological guide *Marionnettes leur manipulation leur théâtre*. I mention this here because you can still see a few Belgian puppets at the museum, but also because I learnt that la rue des Quatre Fils exists in the capital's 3rd arrondissment. En route to our twinning reception in Hastière we had passed through "dramatic Dinant," where there is a split rock, said to have been caused by the impact of Bayard, the flying horse which carries the Duke's four sons away from Charlemagne's pursuing forces in the traditional puppet-theatre tale *Les Quatre Fils Aymon.*

In case of interest: Tchantchès, which derives, believe it or not, from François, has two syllables, the "s" is silent; Toone is pronounced like the English Tone and has a similar evolution (Toone is a Brussels diminutive of Antoine in the same way that Tone comes from Tony<Anthony); Péket has two syllables, the "t" is silent.

"Belgrade chaos in race between puppet and extremist"; "Life beyond genes. People are more than mere DNA puppets," argues Professor Steven Rose – The Times

Our *Newsletter* carried a piece on the Liberal Democrats' use of Punch and Judy during the election campaign. During their conference week at Eastbourne *The Guardian*'s manic cartoonist Steve Bell replied in kind, effectively, if coarsely, guying them in his *If...* strip by setting up a striped booth on the beach, in which the baby accuses his parents of being "in thrall to a big hand up your bum." "No way, Bébé!" – the parents cry. "We are considering entering into a meaningful and constructive coalition with the big hand, and that is all! ...We will preserve our distinctive identity at all times...." However, thing look bad for them when the answer to "why haven't we heard from the policeman or the crocodile all week?" is revealed by a truncheon-wielding character in a rozzer's uniform: "Because I, Bambo the Modnificent have eaten them...." Bell believes in evenhandedness, though, and when Labour rolled up at Brighton the following week the cartoon showed sticks of rock with New Labour written on it being sold on the prom. Once you took a bite, however, you saw that "hidden inside it says 'Tory bastard' all the way through." Blackpool week saw the "alchemical" conception of the next leader of the Conservative Party from a nauseating brew bubbling away in a crucible improvized from Maggie's handbag wearing Major's Y-fronts.

"No more Punch+Judy politics for us" was the Third Party's election slogan. (For historical P&J political cartoons from the collection of John Styles, the Lib Dems' "undercover" election agent, see page 23 of the current *Animations*). The figurative use of Punch and Judy and puppets is invariably derogatory in English, as illustrated in the two headlines from the same day's issue of *The Times* (6 10 97). It would be interesting to know whether the pejorative connotation of puppet is universal: one suspects it is, and it is certainly true of the handful of languages with which I have some familiarity. In French, by the way, Guignol rather than Polichinelle conveys this particular slur better, I think: a recent article in *Le Monde* was headed "L'Etat-guignol."

These two terms have a good deal of metaphorical employment in French, especially in the colloquial language. A *guignol* is basically a buffoon: *cesse de faire le guignol – stop clowning about*; *quel guignol/c'est un vrai guignol – what a shambles*; *passer au guignol – to come up before the beak*; *guignol* can also mean *ticker* (as in heart) and a *prompt-box*; *les guignols* are *the fuzz*. A *polichinelle* is an *ugly, misshapen person, a figure of fun. Faire le polichinelle* is similar to *faire le guignol*; *un secret de polichinelle* is an *open secret* while *avoir un polichinelle dans le tiroir* is *to have a bun in the oven* (a current French film, *Le Secret de Polichinelle*, manages neatly to combine these meanings: after a New Year's Eve party, Rebecca finds herself pregnant – but by whom? She begins her quest.); *mener une vie de polichinelle* is *to lead a rackety life*; and *une voix de polichinelle* is a *shrill, quavering voice*. In a number of languages, including French, marionettes are preferred when it comes to puppet regimes or governments. The French also say *faire jouer les grandes marionnettes – to pull every string* (to attain one's end). *Pantin*, a jumping jack, also means someone who is a *puppet*, a *nonentity*, a *stooge*; *mener une vie de pantin* is also *to lead a wild life*.

Russian also has секрет полишинеля *sekret polishinelya* – a borrowing, no doubt – but invokes the native Petrushka for foolishness and absurdity: Брось валять петрушку *Bros valyat petrushku! – stop being a fool!* Какая-то петрушка получилась *Kakaya to-petrushka poluchilas/An absurd thing happened.* Буратино *Buratino* is Pinocchio and is army slang for an insubordinate soldier or an insolent person; there is a verb буреть *buret*,

to be insolent/insubordinate; буратинить *buratinit* is a jocular verb for *to squeak* (eg of a tape recorder). The Russians, by the way, know Pinocchio through Aleksey Tolstoy's retelling of Carlo Collodi 's story, in which, as he puts it in his preface: "I invented adventures which did not occur at all in the [original] book."

One of the Kallemoeie Theatre programmes has the following passage: "Joris Joseph een man die als het ware met een poppenkast in zijn buik geboren is." meaning "Joris Joseph, a born puppeteer." It literally reads "Joris Joseph, a man who was born with a puppet booth in his stomach, as it were."

I should be interested to receive information from readers on expressions involving puppets in foreign languages. According to membership-list data, you have a large array of tongues at your disposal.

Robin Linklater has been teaching Theatre Design at what is now Nottingham Trent University for over 25 years, but also designs for Opera Restor'd, which specializes in the 17th- and 18th- century repertoire. He has long been interested in puppet theatre (without being a puppeteer) and has run introductory courses for students at Nottingham with a variety of visiting lecturers. A PG Dip and MA Course in Puppet Theatre at NTU was validated last year, but the necessary resources (of space and staff) have still to be arranged before students can enrol. We'll keep you informed.

The Fairy Urgele in Thurso

Robin Linklater

In August I was at the 18th-century court theatre of Drottningholm in Sweden, as the designer of an opera, Rossi's *Orfeo*. Whilst there I met Gabriel Bania, who was playing the violin in the orchestra but whom I also knew as the director of the Wasa Marionettopera, a company I had seen performing a 17th-century puppet opera, Melani's *Il Girello*, at Charleville in 1992.

Earlier this year I stayed up till 4 in the morning recording Donald Macleod's "Through the Night" on Radio 3 when he broadcast the Wasa Marionettopera's new production, *The Fairy Urgele*, by Pleyel (whom I had thought of only as an instrument-maker but who worked with Haydn at Eszterháza. So when I met Gabriel almost the first thing I said was: "Well, when can I see it?" "We're coming to the UK at the beginning of September for two performances – in Thurso." "Great, I'll be there."

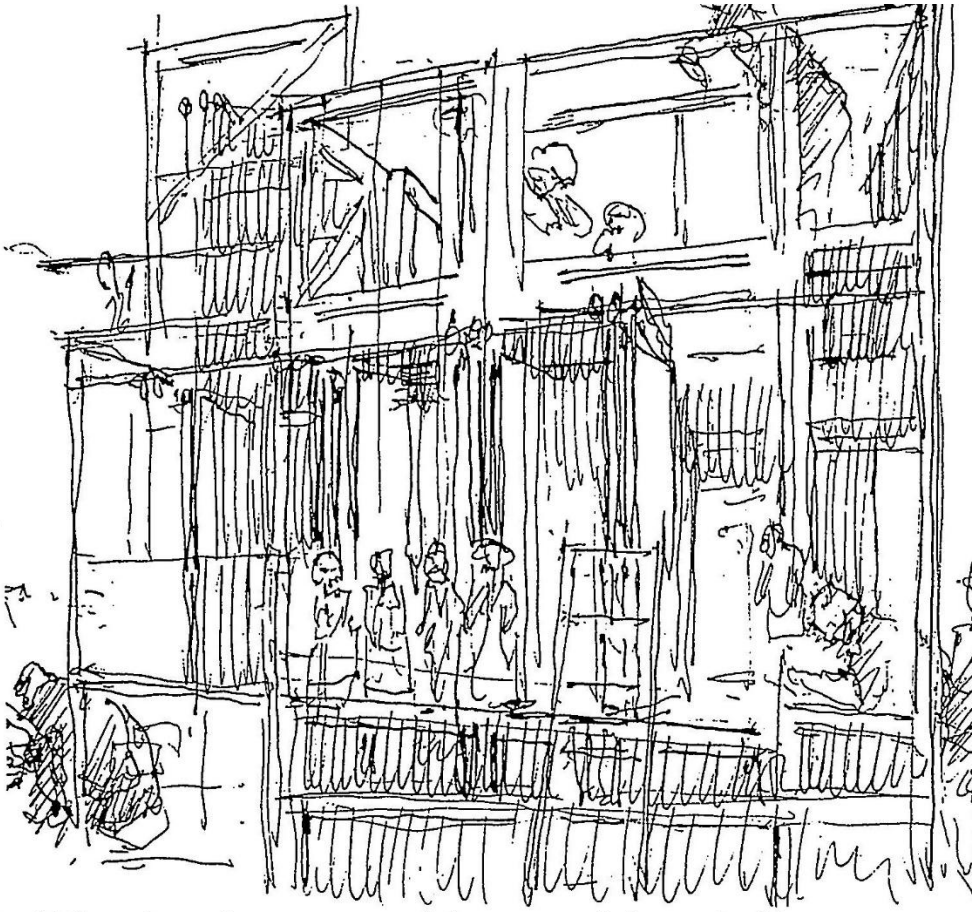
So the Sunday that broke the news of Princess Diana's death found me making my way north on the A1.

I reached Thurso on Monday afternoon – not knowing what sort of place it was. On the map it is just a dot before you fall off the top, but in reality it is quite a town, growing hugely in the 60s when Dounreay power station was built. It has an annual Northlands festival, and the Wasa Company had been booked as part of this year's programme. The company was to perform on the Thursday and Friday in the main hall of a large comprehensive school, seating about 300. (In the event the first performance got about 200 and the second was for children and packed out.) Finding a good B&B at £14 a night was no problem.

I had arranged to sit in on all their rehearsals and see the performance. *The Fairy Urgele* is a mixture of sung arias (in German) and spoken verse. The company had performed in Sweden, Denmark and Germany but had commissioned a new English verse version for this production. My Swedish is non-existent but Gabriel speaks excellent English – what I hadn't realised was that he would conduct the rehearsals in Polish.

Gabriel Bania had been introduced by Henryk Jurkowski to Ryszard Kuzyszua, a designer at the Białystok State Puppet Theatre, and Jurek Muszyński, who actually built the theatre fit-up. Gabriel's intention was to recover the sort of puppet drama that Haydn might have known (and wrote for) by building a theatre and puppets using traditional materials and techniques with authentic stage and musical practice. His enthusiasm for the subject, the period and the

research it involves is infectious – his energy is boundless and the conception for the company seems to be very much his. Gabriel is also the stage director for the company. The musical director is Mark Tatlow (an Englishman), who was Chorus Master at Drottningholm, where he met Gabriel, though he has recently returned to the UK as Director of Music at St Paul's Boys School, London.



The fit-up is huge: 5m wide, 4.5m high and nearly 4m deep. It has a proscenium arch with four sets of shutters in grooves which (with their borders) can all be linked up to effect swift perspective scene changes in the 18th-century stage tradition. There are both flown backcloths and an amazing horizontal roller-towel type background (of a forest) that enables "journeys" to be staged while the performer stays still. The puppets are about 45cm high and are operated from bridges above the stage. They have a single steel rod 2m long to the head with loops of thread to hands and feet which are of cast lead (a single hand and forearm weighs about 12oz, I would guess). The control bar is like a catapult, a 30cm Y of stout wire with the threads going through eyes. Walking the puppet is achieved by pulling the string which "pendulums" both legs. (A better system would be the Czech-style rocking aeroplane, which leaves one hand free to operate the strings.)

The "acting" area of the stage is between the second and third, and the third and fourth shutters. If a puppet is to move up and down stage it has to be lifted out and over the third border which divides the space. In *Urgele* there were five puppet operators and they were able to move fairly freely and quickly around the bridges operating, passing and resetting puppets without any wobble or vibration in the structure, which is all made up of softwood knockdown frames and platforms, which arrived in a Transit-sized van and was put up and rigged in one day. The lighting is provided by candle effect lanterns mounted on scaffolding "ladders" behind the wings and from footlights, and although the intensity of light is low, the figures are modelled very effectively. The theatre construction work and most of the puppets came from the State Puppet Theatre workshops in Białystok, though the company commissioned some extra pieces for this production from Gösta Johansson, another Swedish musician, who is also an electrician and clever woodworker. Jurek and Gösta's common language was English.

Of the five puppeteers working the show, one was Gabriel; there was Janusz

From Robin Linklater's sketchbook

Grodon, a young chap from Warsaw who speaks some English (as he lived in Sweden for a while). The other three all come from the Białystok State Puppet Theatre: Ryszard Dolinski and Krzysztof Pilat being original members and Barbara Muszyńska (very good) being new. The Białystok trio spoke no English.

The first day and a half were spent going through scenes with a borrowed ghettoblaster (why didn't they have their own?) mostly for Barbara's sake. Gabriel stood at the footlights with the score, directing the action. In an operatic duet the only way you can tell which character is singing is by movement, which tends to turn out rather jiggly and twitchy. Choreographing this movement so that the audience's attention is held on the right character but doesn't allow it to become tedious, is one part of the stage director's problems.

At one point I had to put my sketch-book down to stand in for Gabriel in a chorus number. The scenario was quite simple: male chorus sings, enter the Queen, kneel to the Presence, Queen sings, chorus regroups and reacts, and so forth. The puppet's weight meant it was easy to feel the floor and place the feet, hands made nice swinging gestures and the head turned well. Operating at 2 metres, it was easier to see, but more tiring on the back than I expected. My puppet had distinctly egalitarian principles and didn't want to kneel until I made a grand tweak to the rod – down he went, but stuck his foot down a slot on the stage. "Very dangerous place that," says Janusz, "Now you roll over." I presumed he meant the puppet. So while the rest of the sycophants were trilling away, I had an apoplectic fit in front of Her Majesty, who seemed unfazed by it all. The chorus, in fact, was best used as a visual accent to the pulse of the music and it was interesting to see the difference when Gabriel got up on the bridge later: how much sharper the action became when it was led by a musician who knew the score well. The actual behaviour of the puppets was less natural, but "led" the music.

The Fairy Urgele is a comic ballad opera. A noble, Lisuart, and his sidekick, Pedriilo, meet the Lady Marton and her maid, Robinette, in a forest. Lisuart's attempts to seduce Marton are so unwelcome he is reported to the Queen and brought to trial. Pedrillo has had more luck with Robinette. The Queen and her Ladies set Lisuart a riddle for his life: What pleases Women? An old hag appears. Does she have the answer? Yes, but Lisuart has to marry her, so he gives all his worldly goods to Pedrillo and gets a lecture from the old hag about beauty being more than skin deep before she reveals herself as... you've guessed it – Marton. The answer to the Queen's riddle being the rousing finale.... If you want a peaceful life, leave decisions to your WIFE. It was the silliest stuff, but hugely enjoyable.

The spoken dialogue was performed by Graeme Danby (a singer with ENO, WNO, Glyndebourne...). The verse was "bad" Bab Ballad, like Windsor panto, a witty treatment that carried the plot along at a brisk pace and went well with the music (light Haydn with lots of good tunes). The delivery could have had more patter and a lighter, comic treatment of sounds, though Graeme was good at regional accents.

Musically, the production was terrific. Mark Tatlow's band had an excellent string section, with woodwind, brass and "timps," and some very good singers. The balance between the sections, band, singers and dialogue, was fantastic – I'm sure by good judgement rather than luck.

In conclusion? I enjoyed the show and it definitely repays seeing if you have the chance, but there are things worth considering, not only about this production, but for any company trying to do this sort of repertoire (which interests me very much). The first is the cost. I have no idea how much the Northlands Festival paid to bring two performances to Thurso, but it must have been considerable. All told, it was a

company of 28 (singers, instrumentalists, puppeteers, technicians etc). Some of that cost was travel expenses from abroad rather than per diem. To perform only twice in the UK seems extravagant, but, in any case, with a company of that size, festival organizers must be choosing between Wasa Marionettopera and a major dramatic company. Without massive state subsidy, how is a company doing this sort of work going to survive?

While on the subject of resources, two things Wasa should think about. Even with the manpower they had, once Gabriel was up on the bridge, there was no-one "out front" to look at The Show. There were occasions when things needed to be tightened up, particularly given that they only had one run through with the singers and band before the first performance. The other thing was the absence of promotional material. There was nothing the audience could buy: postcards, posters, videos, CDs, T-shirts, fridge magnets.... There was a give-away booklet about the company (quite old and nothing about this production), but nothing to bring in money – which is what it's all about.

The second consideration is, literally, the show – what the audience saw.

The singers and the orchestra were out of sight – behind screens at the side and behind the fit-up. This was for various reasons: the balance of the sound, the lighting and the distraction. The first I'll leave, but the lighting concerned the fact that the musicians need music-stands with lights which are brighter than the stage lights (could this be solved with breast-high screens and hooded music-stands?) The last is the feeling that if the audience could see the musicians they would be a distraction from the puppet performance. In my opinion, this just means the puppets aren't interesting enough.

Much of this company's effort has gone into what can't be seen; the musicians and singers, the whole stage fit-up and the way it works. It somehow seemed a pity not to be able to see more, if not all of it. It may be – and probably is – very authentic, but I felt I had a better time than the rest of the audience, because I knew what was going on back-stage.

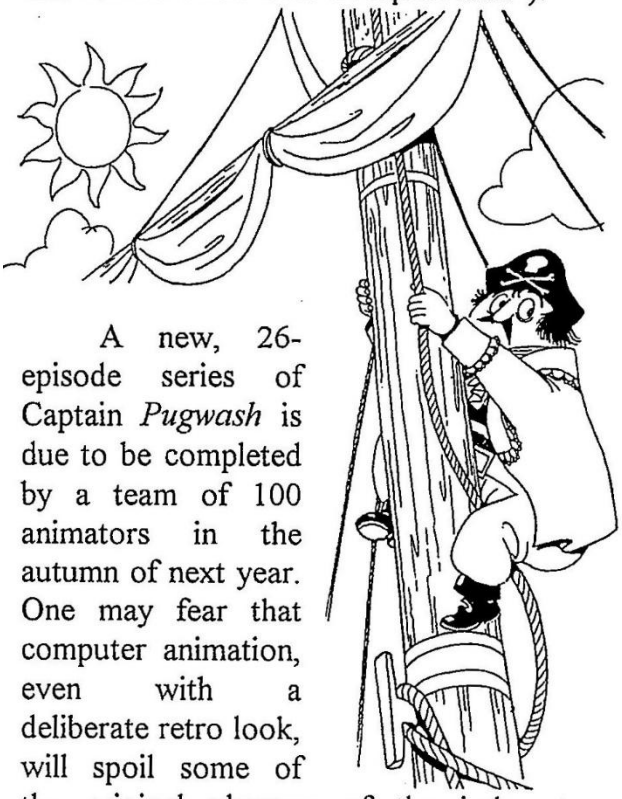
Press Cuttings

Writing in his *Daily Telegraph* column, Auberon Waugh, that epitome of insularity, says it is "disgraceful that Americans should be able to dictate the names of our sweets," Opal Fruits having now become, on American insistence, Starburst. But – perhaps he is unaware – U.S. linguistic diktat does not stop there: the transatlantic PC lobby, afraid of causing offence to the Prince Charleses of this world, has renamed Big Ears (recently to be seen standing next to Noddy on a 20p stamp) White Beard. This is all part of a deal struck by The Enid Blyton Company for a £5-million cartoon series to be made and screened in North America.

According to *The Guardian*, a York Taxi driver uses a Sooty puppet against anyone he suspects of road rage, saying squabbles end in shrieks of laughter. Personally, I cannot think of anything more likely to make me want to hit him (the taxi-driver, that is, rather than the corporate bear), although it does remind me of a story I heard from Dan Bishop. He was travelling at night, back in 1987, from a ceilidh at Peter Tomelty's Inn, Portaferry, Co Down, with Bill Dane. Suddenly, circling lights were seen ahead: "Oh God, it's the IRA." Now, it turned out to be the RUC and, yes, Bill's Landrover does have Punch painted on the side, however, I do not think that I would have greeted the constabulary with two synchronized swazzled voices.

Two issues ago I wrote about Philip Roth's *Sabbath's Theater*, the eponymous central character of which specializes in obscene puppetry. If the novel should be transferred to the screen, the American shock-jock Howard Stern, who plays himself in the current film *Private Parts*, would seem to have the ideal credentials for this part too, having, at high school, tried his hand as a puppet pornographer.

There's a new educational video out called *Johnny Condom*. Johnny is a singing puppet with a safer-sex line: "my friend is Wicked Willy – together we're a team...." The film has received an impressive array of commendations, including from the World Health Organization. The pro-condom message is reinforced by the presence of the likes of Kim Wilde ("best be prepared... keep them in a handbag or in your bathroom or on you. I would – I do.") and young male pop stars, like the group Upside Down ("Any girl that carries a condom. I respect that.").



A new, 26-episode series of Captain *Pugwash* is due to be completed by a team of 100 animators in the autumn of next year. One may fear that computer animation, even with a deliberate retro look, will spoil some of the original pleasure of the jerky, two-dimensional figures, but that could be just the bane of nostalgia. The Black Pig, which first hove into view in 1957, will now be based in the Caribbean rather than the port of Rye, East Sussex, and the cast will be expanded to include American, Chinese, and *female* characters. However, I don't imagine there will be any need for shipboard prophylaxis.

Unima Scholarships

Copies of the enclosed leaflet were 'floating about' at the recent Charleville festival. We have no other information, but would be pleased to cooperate with members who wish to follow it up.

Pugwash from *Pugwash Aloft* by J Ryan

The Golem by Gustav Meyrink

Charles Broughton

The city is Prague, in the years before the First World War. Gustav Meyer, a bank manager in his mid-thirties is in disgrace. Accused of dabbling in the occult in order to improve the bank's fortunes, he is thrown into gaol. On his release, two and a half months later, he is financially ruined and begins to write in order to earn a living. He becomes a regular figure amongst the city's café society and two of his drinking companions are Richard Teschner[1], the puppeteer, and Vrieslander, the painter. In 1907 Meyer and Teschner form a puppet company, but the project fails. In the same year Meyer begins writing his first novel, *The Eternal Jew*.

Set in the cramped Jewish quarter of Prague, the novel tells the story of Athanasius Pernath, a gem cutter and engraver in his late thirties who has suffered a mental breakdown which has wiped out all memory of his past life. In trying to recall his previous existence he experiences a number of bizarre and unsettling episodes. He is visited by his doppelgänger, who presents him with a book and makes him read a chapter headed "The Impregnation of Souls". When he relates the story to his friend Zwakh, the puppeteer, who is based on Teschner, he is told that he has been visited by the Golem.

This human monster made out of clay was created by a rabbi centuries before to help with various menial tasks in the synagogue. It escaped from its master and once every 33 years it appears in the Ghetto, attacking the people and causing widespread panic. It is a phantasm of its former self able to assume the form of a living person so that it blends in with its surroundings. After each appearance it disappears into a house next to the synagogue. It had been thought that every room and every corridor in this house had been thoroughly searched, until it was noticed that from the street there could be seen a tiny barred window right at the top of the house. But no stairs lead that far up, no

corridor stretched that way across, and no door could be found.

As Zwakh is telling Pernath this story, Vrieslander the painter is carving away at a wooden head for one of Zwakh's puppets and as the features emerge from the wood and the fixed expression takes shape Pernath feels his jaw locking tight and he is unable to speak. His immobile expression implies that he is still listening to Zwakh's story but his efforts to speak are ineffectual and as Vrieslander makes the final cut the puppet's face takes on the appearance of the Golem and Pernath is looking through the puppet's eyes, twirling around in the painter's hands until he loses consciousness.

This ability for inanimate objects to appear to take over and control the people around them happens again when Pernath finds his way through an underground labyrinth that brings him up through a star-shaped trapdoor into the room that has no door in the house next to the synagogue. Freezing cold, be finds an old suit thrown into the corner and, despite the smell of decay, he is thankful for the extra warmth as he puts it on.

As dawn breaks, the early morning light helps him, guiding him back through the tunnels until he emerges once more into the heart of the Ghetto. An old man is frightened by his appearance and his shouts bring out a crowd, which chases Pernath through the narrow alleys, thinking that he is the Golem. The suit that he is wearing is cut in a style that hasn't been seen for many years. Hiding in the shadows, he takes off the suit and as he steps back out into the light the crowd goes streaming past him. Later he hears that an old tramp who found the suit has been trapped and caught.

Suggestion, implication, insinuation. The novel uses suggestion in different ways. Characters manipulate each other to carry out various actions, seeming to use love or sometimes flattery to get their way. Inanimate objects seem to produce emotional outbursts in those that use them and the people with whom they come into contact.

The desire to experience events which are practically impossible led to Meyer experimenting with drugs, yoga, sleep deprivation and fasting to stimulate visionary experiences and to explore the astral plane.

The novel was published in serial form in 1913/14. Meyer changed the title to *The Golem*[2] and in 1917 he changed his name to Meyrink.

The breathless narrative and the extraordinary gallery of characters helped to make the book an instant success. It was first filmed by Paul Wegener in 1914, though only his 1920 version survives.

Meyrink shares with Charles Dickens (whose work he admired and translated into German) a passion for the grotesque both in the people he writes about and the places they inhabit. Their characters wear a public mask, concealing the hidden room wherein their true character watches and waits.

The book is firmly rooted in its time and place. Three-quarters of a century ago Prague did have a Ghetto, where Jewish traditions and folklore flourished and the possibility of the Golem appearing was made to seem very real. Some of the tales had this mythical monster returning to help the Jews in time of trouble. If it had, then perhaps Meyrink's evocative world could still be seen today. In reality it was purged by the Third Reich.

[1]Richard Teschner (1879-1948), a UNIMA member of honour, created a unique form of puppet theatre, influenced by Javanese puppets, involving the use of springs and rod and string controls from below stage. Interestingly, in the context of his friend Meyrink, the proscenium of his Figurenspeiegel, now in the Austrian National Library, has the signs of the Zodiac on it. Philpott's *Dictionary* is a good quick reference, but readers of German should see Jarmila Weißenböck's *Der Figurenspiegel Richard Teschner.*

[2]The *Golem*, Gustav Meyrink, translated by Mike Mitchell, Dedalus Ltd (the Eastern Arts Board assisted the translation).

Praga Magica

The event in the Bohemian capital this summer was *Rudolf II and Prague*, an exhibition, held in various parts of Hradčany Castle, which reconstituted part of the long-dispersed artistic and scientific splendour of the imperial court. Rudolf, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, may have been an ineffectual ruler, but he was a magnificent patron of the arts and sciences. Science at that time included a strong interest in alchemy, particularly on the part of the Emperor (occult practitioners from Elizabethan England – both represented in the exhibition – included the magician John Dee, with his talking mirror, and the crop-eared criminal Edward Kelley), and this interest in transformation extended to the creation of life from inert matter. Hence the legend of the Golem, created out of the mud of the River Vltava by Rabbi Jehuda Löw to protect the Jewish population against pogroms. The attribution of the Golem to the rabbi was a much later, Romantic invention, but Löw, a great scholar, albeit outside the cabbalist tradition, did exist (you can see his grave in the Old Jewish Cemetery) and, what is more, he was in fact, extraordinarily for a Jew, granted an audience with the Emperor (16 February 1592).

Opera-goers may also know that Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* features the beautiful singer Emilia Marty, who has lived for over 300 years after drinking an elixir, devised by her father, who was a physician to Emperor Rudolf. This opera (currently being toured by Glyndebourne, as it happens) is based on the play of the same name by Karel Čapek, who, in *RUR*, also gave us the word "robot." At much the same time as Meyrink and Čapek, Kafka gave us *The Metamorphosis* and the strange creature Odradek ("an etymologically elusive name which means a moving device"). But the city has known a good deal more corporeal strangeness besides, ranging from the kitsch wax effigy of the infant Jesus (*pražské Jezulátko/bambino di Praga*), donated to the Church of Our Lady Victorious in the early 17th century, which still attracts pilgrims to this day, to the now-vanished, Lenin-aping mummy of post-1948 leader Klement Gottwald, bequeathed to the country by the Communists.

Anyway, enough of monsters, automata, "miraculous" manikin, and mummy, let's look at more familiar kindred spirits in the shape of puppets. Bohemia's tradition here is immediately obvious from the numerous shops in the capital selling marionettes, ranging from tourist tat to fine examples of woodcarving, and the good number of theatres producing puppet shows. This August, for example, you could have chosen between Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Zázračné divadlo barokního světa (Magic Theatre of the Baroque World) and Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the Mezinárodní institut loutkářského umění (International Institute of Marionette Art) or, if you prefer Mozart, *Don Giovanni* at the Národní divadlo marionet (National Marionette Theatre). There are also half-a-dozen black-theatre shows in town.

Two puppet shows were specifically linked to the Rudolfine theme. The Buchty a loutky (Cakes and Puppets) troupe's *Invisible Prague*, at the Divadlo v Celetné, depicting the spagyric Prague of legend and enigma with puppets, animated objects, music and song (the dialogue and songs were all in an invented language). A street-theatre performance called *Sugar for my Horse* led you from the Old Town Square down Celetná to the theatre located at no. 17. In Divadlo Minor's *Rudolf II and Rabbi Löw*, the two figures recall the events of their time, which are reenacted by puppets. This was an outdoors performance in the Františkanská zahrada. All but one of the venues are in Prague 1, the city centre. The exception is the Divadlo Spejbla a Hurvínka, which is now in Prague 6 – a short ride away.

Strangely, given the title, the Švankmajers (who have collaborated on the majority of projects since 1960) were not represented at the *Czech Imaginative Art* exhibition at the Rudolfinum, but, on the other hand, Jan and Eva were much in evidence elsewhere in the city. At the Obecní galerie Beseda, for example, surrounded by Eva Švankmajerová's surrealist paintings, I was delighted to find the white rabbit and the pike-headed (as in fish) courtier from *Alice*; Don Avenez from *Don Juan*, a larger-than-life-size seated wooden figure full of presence; and the wonderful giant angel's head which debouches a host of angelets in *Faust*. There were several tactile marionettes by Jan on the wall, notably a *Kašpárek* (1994) unlike any you will have seen, with an array of red wooden legs and deformed, clay trunk and head, and a *Tortured Puppet* (same year) – a mass of nails, straw, and misshapen extrusion.

A new Švankmajer feature, entitled *Otesánek* is under preparation (Otesánek is a fairy-tale character, a small carved figure – analogy with Pinocchio suggests itself – with an insatiable appetite). It will combine actors and animation as in other recent productions and, like *Conspirators of Pleasure*, will be set in Prague. Just before leaving I caught an exhibition of Czech and Slovak surrealists – where the Švankmajers were again present – at the Old Town Hall and learned that, all being well, the surrealist group will exhibit in Swansea next year. Anyone who wants to subscribe to their journal, *Analogon*, or obtain further information on surrealist activities in the country can reach them at www.terminal.cz/~surreal/gambra (they take plastic and even quote the current exchange rate on-screen).

You should also visit the puppet museum of the International Institute of Marionette Art, Karlova 12, and the Divadelní ústav (Theatre Institute), Celetná 17, which is the headquarters of Czech UNIMA and has a shop selling puppetry books and puppets. I did not have time to go to the Muzeum betlémů (Museum of Bethlehems), but the collection sounds interesting. Take a train at Smíchov and travel the 28km to Karlštejn, where you can combine the museum with a walk around Charles IV's fairy-tale castle.

Readers will be familiar with Czech UNIMA's monthly journal, *Loutkář* which, despite scares, is still going strong. It is well illustrated and contains a résumé in English. You may, however, be unaware of *Czech Theatre*, a "glossy" covering Czech and Slovak theatre which comes out twice a year with text in French and English. The amount of puppetry material in it varies: No 13/1997 is entirely given over to puppet theatre, but even No 12/1996, which is less weighted toward it, has enough to satisfy any puppet enthusiast. There is, of course, much more to puppetry than the capital, and for information on the republic's contemporary theatre, museums and collections, festivals, venues, shops, galleries, and carvers the attractively illustrated 18-page *Czech Puppets* by Nina Malíková and Jan Dvořák is worth purchasing.

If you are interested in the Golem and/or Prague you must read *Magic Prague* by the late Italian scholar Angelo Maria Ripellino (Picador). (The novelist Ivan Klíma describes it as "the finest and best informed book about Prague I have ever read.") *Golem* (available in English) by Eduard Petiška, published by the Martin publishing house, ISBN 80-900129-2-2, is worth obtaining too. The classic film version of the legend is, as Charles Broughton says, Paul Wegener's film (if you are a fan of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, you'll enjoy Wegener's angular expressionist architecture). There is also a French version of the legend, *Le Golem*, directed by Julien Duvivier (better known for *Pépé le Moko*) at Prague's Barrandov Studios in 1935. (According to the opening credits, it is "inspired by the celebrated legend of Prague and by Voskovec and Werich," the two clowns of the Liberated Theatre, who wrote *The Golem*, a Dadaist "Romantic revue in 11

scenes," including songs and dances, in 1931. I shall include a snippet on V+W and Skupa in the next issue). Charles Broughton tells me that he first encountered the Golem in Peter Ackroyd's murder thriller *Dan Leno and The Limehouse Golem*, which is set, as the title implies, in the milieu of the Victorian music hall. (Incidentally, Ackroyd's time-bending *The House of Doctor Dr Dee* was broadcast on R4, 30 September.) Angela Carter's short story *Alice in Prague or The Curious Room*, which is about the Prague peregrination of Dee and Kelley, is good fun. I can also recommend a recent Czech-English publication entitled *Jan Švankmajer Transformation of the Senses*, Central Europe Gallery and Publishing House, ISBN 80-901559-3-6. It contains essays by František Dryje and the Švankmajers, among others, plus 50 colour and black-and-white reproductions, including a tactile *Golem Puppet*. The morphing of clay figures in his films is sometimes known as the "golem technique."

Both the Golem films are available on video. I have said this before, but, if you are in the Czech Republic, do remember that videos bought there are compatible, including colour, with our system, and, at roughly £6, are a snip. I brought back only Zeman's *Baron Prášil* (Baron Munchausen), but, for example, the Krátký Film catalogue includes innumerable Trnkas, Borns, Švankmajers, at least five other Zemans, and Barta's marvellous *Krysař* (The Rat Catcher), to mention just the best known.

Image-Making & -Breaking

The potency of images and their potential for causing outrage needs little underlining. Topical examples would be the controversies over *paparazzi* and the Royal Academy's *Sensation* show, particularly Marcus Harvey's huge mugshot of Myra Hindley (twice defaced on the opening day), as well as the spray-painting of a bronze of Steve Biko by rightwingers in South Africa, but I was more intrigued by an absurd historical example of iconoclasm which I found in an article by Alevtina Polyakova entitled "Little Ceramic Children," carried in Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Newspaper), 5 8 97. The piece was about the highly-prized hand-made dolls created by Yelena Yazykovaya in her small Moscow flat. I quote just a few lines: "In 1927 the Sovnarkom [Council of People's Commissars] issued an edict for the destruction of all 'excessively bourgeois dolls.' All dolls of well-to-do young ladies in crinoline dresses with delicate porcelain faces were ruthlessly smashed, while those that did not fall into the hands of the 'men in leather jackets' [security police] were hidden away in trunks and attics by their owners for a long time. The porcelain Elizas and Magdalenas were replaced by the chubby-cheeked, goggle-eyed plastic Alenkas produced by the new doll industry. Industrial techniques squeezed out handicraft for a long time."

Russian, incidentally, is one of those numerous languages where the word for doll and puppet is the same – кукла *kukla*. Театр кукол *teatr kukol* is puppet theatre, кукольник *kukolnik* is puppeteer; and ручная/перчаточная кукла *ruchnaya/ perchatochnaya kukla* is a hand/glove puppet; while марионетка *marionetka* is, unsurprisingly, marionette, марионеточное государство *marionetochnoye gosudarstvo* is a puppet state.

The raw, transgressive nature of popular street theatre was, of course, to prove no more acceptable to the authorities than "bourgeois" influence. In her highly recommendable *Petrushka the Russian carnival puppet theatre*, Catriona Kelly writes (p 195): "Petrushka's subversive character did not suit the new atmosphere of the 1930s...", although it had in fact been taken up for agit-prop purposes by various Red Petrushka groups in the twenties. Big Brother knew best and had a much bigger stick.

I should be pleased to hear from anyone who has seen contemporary Petrushka performances.

The port of Castellamare di Stabia, near Naples, hosts a puppet festival each July with a special theme. This year it was the relationship between Pulcinella and Punch. Salvatore Gatto, Gaspare Nasuto, Maria Imperatrice, and Bruno Leone gave their versions of Pulcinella, Glyn Edwards and Dan Bishop their Punch. George Speaight delivered a paper on this topic, which we print below. Further information on the festival will appear in the next *Animations* and *Around The World With Mr. Punch.*

Punch and Pulcinella

George Speaight

When I first conceived the idea of writing a history of the Punch and Judy show, nearly 60 years ago, I accepted the general opinion that it had been brought to England by an Italian performer. And, indeed, I found that an Italian puppeteer, called Pietro Gimonde, from Bologna, had performed *Pollicinella* with great success in London in 1662, even receiving an invitation to appear at the British court.

But when I studied the performance presented by Gimonde, it was clear that this was not a glove puppet show like Pulcinella today, but was almost certainly an elaborate marionette show. It was accompanied by an orchestra of fiddlers, including a dulcimer player. It needed a platform measuring 20ft by 18ft (7m x 6m) and high enough off the floor for a door to be let into the side, suggesting the use of a trap door, when it appeared at court. When Gimonde was appearing in Paris, 16 years later, he performed plays by Molière and boasted that his changes of scenery and numerous machines had been adapted to the new stories, in which his Roman Polichinel was completely at home.

Meanwhile the English grappled with the unfamiliar syllables of Pollicinella, Polichinelli, Punctionella, Polichinello, Punchinnalla, or Punchinello, until by the end of the 17th century he was shortened to plain Punch. He was certainly taken to the hearts of the British public, and adopted as the chief comic character in a whole range of English marionette shows, performing many purely English folk tales or biblical stories. He was

always accompanied by an English wife called Joan, who continually quarrelled with him. This continued right up to the end of the 18th century, but it was clearly not what we know as Pulcinella today, nor as Punch and Judy.

During this time, however, there are a few scattered references to glove puppet Punch shows in the fairs, in the open air, usually to gather an audience for the plays in the marionette theatres. Glove puppet shows, with their traditional beatings and slapstick, had been known in England before Pulcinella ever arrived, and were introduced into Ben Jonson's play of *Bartholomew Fair* of 1614. Punch did not appear in that, but clearly Punch did appear in the fairground glove puppet shows of the 18th century.

Then, in 1785, there is a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson showing a glove puppet show with Punch in it, giving a spanking to the bare bottom of what I fear must be his wife. This is taking place as an attraction in the streets of London. Punch is

dressed much as we know him today, in a red costume with big buttons on his humps in front and behind, and a pointed hat with a bell at the tip, much as he is shown in other late 18th -century prints. He does *not* look in the least like Pulcinella, he is not dressed in white, nor does he wear a black half-mask. This is followed by several more prints of Punch glove puppet shows in the street. By the end of the 18th century he was clearly established as a popular attraction in the streets of London. His wife had changed her name to Judy by 1818, and the text of his drama was first printed in 1828, with splendid illustrations by George Cruikshank. From then until today his popularity has never died. There are upwards of 200 Punch and Judy "professors," as they like to call themselves, in Britain today.

By the time I had completed my research for my history of Punch and Judy – it took 16 years – I had established an unbroken line of descent for Punch from the arrival of Pietro Gimonde in 1662, through the marionette plays and the fairground glove puppet shows of the 18th century. It continued to the appearances of Punch in glove puppet shows of the streets in 1785, and the Punch and Judy shows that we know today. I felt emboldened to write in my book, published in 1955, that "There is a clear case for claiming a purely English origin for Punch and Judy."

However, there were those who disputed this statement, notably the German puppet historian Hans Purschke and an English Punch performer, Michael Byrom, who wrote two books, published in 1972 and 1983. He claimed that the English Punch and Judy show was, in essence, the Italian Pulcinella street show that had been carried to England by a performer called Piccini, whose show had been published as *Punch and Judy* in 1828.

In fairness to Michael Byrom I must point out that there are arguments in his favour. The tradition among Punch and Judy performers in the mid-19th century was that the origin of Punch was taken from Italy and brought over to England by Piccini in about 1780. There was another print of a street show in London in 1785, which was entitled "The Italian Puppet Show". And there is, of course, a general resemblance of short dialogues followed by beatings between the Pulcinella shows and Punch and Judy. But I looked in vain for any evidence of what the Pulcinella shows consisted of either in their origin or even today. I had attended a conference in Venice in 1957 at which I asked for any printed evidence of the content of the Pulcinella show. This conference was also attended by the distinguished theatre historian AC Bragaglia, who replied that there were 50 pages of titles of printed Pulcinella shows in the bibliography of his book on this character. But, so far as I could judge, not a single one of these titles referred to the street Pulcinella puppet show.

I visited Italy in the 1970s, and watched an entertaining Pulcinella show on the Janiculum in Rome, performed by Carlo Piantadosi, of which I obtained a tape. This bore no resemblance to Punch and Judy, but it introduced a Dog, who is also often featured in Punch shows. And a few years later I saw a Pulcinella show in London, performed by Bruno Leone, which introduced the scene of Pulcinella hanging the Hangman, which was originally an important feature of Punch and Judy. But in both these cases, though I admit that my claim seemed dented, I maintained that it might well be Pulcinella who had copied Punch. After all, the Punch and Judy text had been widely available since 1828 and often reprinted.

But then in 1986 there were published a number of texts of Pulcinella streets shows as performed by Bruno Leone under the title *La Guatattella: burattini e burattinai a Napoli*. Nunzio Zampella was regarded as having maintained the traditions of Neapolitan puppetry more faithfully than any other performer: And in one of these plays, *Il Cane*, the Dog plays a large part; and in another, *Il Posto Privato, l'Arresto, la Confessione e l'Impiccagione*, the scene with

the Hangman is a major part of the plot. But though my theory was further dented, I still feel that it was possible that Zampella might have copied some business from the English Punch and Judy.

But then, in January 1994, I had the opportunity to pay a short visit to Venice. And in the Piazza San Marco there was an exhibition of the paintings of Pietro Longhi, which of course I visited, and there was a painting of a Pulcinella street show with a live Dog in the booth, which was dated as in the 1760s.

This converted me: 1760 was 20 years earlier than the earliest recorded street Punch show in England, and 60 years earlier than the earliest recorded evidence of a Dog in the Punch and Judy show in England. And if a Dog had appeared in Pulcinella shows in the 1760s, it was England that had copied Italy in putting a Dog into the booth in the 1820s. And if Zampella was introducing the Hangman scene in the 1980s, it was not impossible, and perhaps likely, that his ancestors had been introducing such a scene in the 1780s. And so I was forced to admit the possibility that at least the Dog and the Hangman had originally featured in the Pulcinella show before being taken into Punch and Judy.

This does not mean that the Punch and Judy show was brought in its present form to England from Italy. Both countries have made their own contribution. But I now wish to withdraw my claim for the sole rights in the Punch and Judy show for England. Certain characters and incidents may be granted to Italy:

Pulcinella, though not his costume or physical features.
The Dog, though it was England that called him Toby.
The Dog's Owner.
The Hangman and the gallows.
Business with the coffin after the hanging.
The Devil, who appears in the early history of both Pulcinella and Punch and both countries can claim him.

On the other side, there may be set characters in the Punch and Judy show which are of unquestioned English origin:

Judy, Punch's wife, a totally different character to Pulcinella's girlfriend, usually called Teresina.
Judy's Baby – no Italian mother would countenance Punch's atrocious action in throwing it out of the window.
The Doctor.
The Black man.
The Clown, based on Grimaldi, the English pantomime clown.
The Crocodile, which seems to have come from Germany.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I here express my regrets for having diminished the Italian contribution to the Punch and Judy show, and beg your forgiveness. If there is any blame, perhaps the Italians may share in that for having waited so long – until 1986 – before printing a detailed text and description of the Pulcinella street show. And at the end we can recognize Punch and Judy as a vibrant piece of popular theatre, to which both Italy and England have made their contribution.

Anna Markus

Ray DaSilva

Following our coverage of the success of Anna's lottery bid in the last *Bulletin* it is particularly sad to have to inform you that she died on 10 October, aged 70. As already reported, Anna commenced her puppetry with the Hungarian State Puppet Theatre, she was then with Polka and later settled in Manchester. She had a lively and vibrant personality, which will be missed especially in the Northwest. Our sympathies go to her husband, Walter Sondhelm, and her children. Walter mentioned that on the day she died, Anna was busy sketching designs for the new production, *Jonah*, scheduled for early 1998; and he expressed the hope that perhaps some of her friends might take up this work.

The previous two articles by Anna Ingleby– one in this publication, the other in *Animations* – had puppetry at their centre. This piece (a longer version of which is available on request) deals with the performing arts in general. On Java and Bali, music, dance, including mask dance, and puppetry form a much closer unity than in Europe, and whereas puppetry here is marginal, on Java and Bali it is nodal, despite the advent of other powerful media, and other art forms derive from it. The article also acts as a corrective to the – admittedly understandable – perception that Indonesian culture is "pure tradition": it borrows intra- and extraculturally *just like us*. The discussion of puppetry and television reminds me of the evolution of dance and video here, particularly as pioneered by the Merce Cunningham Company – from a record of rehearsal to the choreographing of video-specific pieces. The article also raises the age-old conundrum of the extent to which one may judge other cultures "from the outside." While in its reference to audience response it provides a sociological sidelight on a society where the official state philosophy of *Panca Sila* (Five Principles) is frequently used to suppress dissent in the name of a spurious consensus.

It was written by Anna when she had been in the country for 7½ months, by which time, she calculates, she had seen 27 *wayang* shows, eight dance shows, seven music shows, and 22 shows of theatre and/or indefinable performances – a few of which she had also taken part in. Anna has extended her visa until August 1998 in order to continue her study of *wayang golek* and *topeng*.

Glimpses of Current Theatre and Puppet-Related Performances in Indonesia

Anna Ingleby

Most of the theate shows I have seen took place at the National Festival of Theatre 3-7 October 1996. This took place in Bandung, West Java, at Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia and Taman Budaya, and consisted of 27 shows, representing each province of Indonesia. There were also workshops and seminars plus an art exhibition, and it would not have felt like Indonesia had it not been opened and closed by countless ceremonies with various troupes of people clad in wonderfully bright uniforms. Of the 11 shows which I saw only three or four really left strong impressions. This was probably largely due to my not understanding Indonesian fluently yet, but it was after watching the performance from East Java that I became fascinated as to how a show could grip my attention so tightly for a whole hour without understanding any of the dialogue (or even the story) until afterwards.

The audience is brought to silence as the lights dim and all we can see are musicians sitting in a faint red glow at the back of the stage, screened by latticed bamboo. Two mysterious cloaked women start to move behind the screens and sing hauntingly. Tins with naked flames surround the three edges of the arena, and we are suddenly drawn to a spotlit figure who climbs out of the dark and on to a downstage corner of the stage. He has dramatic face makeup with prominent eyebrows and a headdress with dreadlocks of cloth. He appears like a warrior, but with his upper body covered in modern net-like attire. After a short monologue, he dances tight and spritely steps accompanied by further music from the traditional instruments at the back. In between further speeches he assumes fixed poses, again drawn from traditional dance movement, and later further characters appear in the same costume but of different colours. This show was called *Makam Bisu* (*Silent Grave*). It seemed to me that of all the shows I saw this one was the most successful union of East and West. The focus of the action was constantly changing; the costumes were stylized to a point which foreign eyes could recognize as such, and the aesthetic of the design as a whole had a beautiful economy about it. Traditional materials such as bamboo were used on the set to great dramatic effect: at one point a character is killed with a *keris* (dagger), and as this happens a blind falls down to hide him, while another screen sheds a tower of thick bamboo sticks all over the stage as swiftly as a guillotine. .... The music was sometimes haunting, sometimes loud and prominent, and sometimes just provided the minimum of tension beneath different dialogues. The dances fitted perfectly with this, and there were very smooth lighting

changes. Every so often two cloaked women with painted faces (reminiscent of the witches in *Macbeth*) would also appear, speaking in unison.

The show from West Java was quite different. This was *Kaspar*, presented by Teater Payung Hitam (Black Umbrella Theatre) under the direction of Rachman Sabur. Apart from the few instances when language was used, this could have been mistaken for a Western/European production because of the futuristic, machine-like world it portrayed. This was a masterly piece of physical theatre and much could be understood without the occasional language. Five men painted silver with shaved heads created the moving parts of a factory floor. Metal dustbins and robotic figures made from tin cans were also used. At one point the latter were suddenly lowered from the ceiling and danced in a crazy fashion on top of the dustbins. From a puppetry point of view, these could have been more effective with less movement, but on a purely symbolic level they successfully portrayed extreme chaos. This was the story of one man's rebellion within this mechanized system. This production did not seem to be inspired by the traditional performing arts of Indonesia, but I definitely sensed that this theme was very close to the hearts of all the audience. Similar themes of struggling, tortured characters seem to be something I have frequently seen in many small shows or pieces of "live art" – "happenings", as they are called here. ....

The show from Yogyakarta (a province in itself) was also at times quite stunning for me to watch owing to the wonderful gold costumes and movement based on *wayang orang* (dance based on *wayang kulit* movements). However, as a foreigner it was hard for me to understand how this was modern and different from tradition. My friend told me that the costumes were modern, as were the methods of blocking and integrating movement and speech. Old forms had not been combined in this way before.

Often throughout those three days I would be watching a show and suddenly have to remind myself that I was watching a NATIONAL festival, when really it often felt like watching a school play because acting techniques were often flat or overdramatic. However, I do not feel it is my right to criticize when I do not fully understand the background these shows have come from. What to me might not seem so new or exciting – for example, seeing very slow Sumatran dance steps being performed in yellow hooded raincoats – might in fact be highly revolutionary and full of all kinds of significant symbolism unknown to me.

The closing show of the festival was *Para Penjudi* (*The Gamblers*) by Nikolay Gogol, performed by the hosting theatre department of STSI Bandung and directed by Rachman Sabur. This seemed like a very successful adaptation of a Western theatre piece. In this version each of the gamblers came from a different part of Indonesia – the richest gambler, who (eventually) lost, was from Central Java. ....

During the festival I was very happy to see the campus of STSI really come alive with theatre people from all over Indonesia and colourful stalls of merchandise. As one teacher from the theatre department was walking by I commented on how nice it was to have such a festival there – but he laughed as he walked off, saying "Oh, but this is a government festival!" Indeed it is hard to tell how representative these shows really were of what is truly happening in theatre and the performing arts of Indonesia. Certainly, the unscheduled "happening" outside the front of the college were very different – more abstract, more tortured figures crawling around, and red painted men on the roof with buckets! Generally speaking, however, I feel that we can celebrate that new forms are being experimented with, and that East and West can inspire each other, even if the concept of "theatre" (for now, my definition being: going inside a building and watching a modern drama for an hour or so) is a relatively young concept in Indonesia. I am

told that standards have improved a lot in the three years since the last National Theatre Festival, and that it will take a long time to mature.

An English friend (a fellow-student) once made some derogatory comment about Indonesian students studying Western theatre. He felt this was unnatural, considering the wealth of indigenous performing traditions. However, I feel that just as foreigners here enjoy learning about Indonesian forms of expression, Indonesians have an equal right to learn about Western ones. I once heard an Indonesian artist saying that while most Indonesians pray to the West (towards Mecca, if they are Muslim), they do not need to educate themselves towards the West. Ideally, I feel that artists from West and East need to understand each others' techniques but ultimately simply borrow techniques in order to express what is true and relevant to themselves. Another Indonesian friend commented on how valuable it is to learn many Western theatre techniques and theories, but that it is not relevant to start specializing in techniques rooted in European tradition (fencing, say) when there are movements which could be more relevantly incorporated from the existing traditions of various parts of Indonesia.

I hope theatre continues to grow as a means of freeing artists to experiment with new ideas and collaborations whilst also respecting the old and building on pertinent traditions. In the field of music this certainly seems to be the case.... Likewise in the field of dance I have seen some fantastic new work based on the old. Sometimes this has included large-scale projected shadows of dancers interacting with other dancers in the front of the stage. ....

I feel I need to make special mention of a show called *Wayang Listrik* (*Electric Wayang*), which I saw near Ubud, Bali, in January. It was directed by the North American Larry Reed in collaboration with I Dewa Putu Berata of Bali, who choreographed and made many of the costumes, headdresses, and *wayang kulit*. It took place in a *pendopa* – in this case like a timber Dutch barn without walls. The shadow screen stretched from ceiling to floor and right across the width of the building.

Before the show I went backstage. Behind the stage were just five lamps, strategically placed in a curve and all pointed toward the screen. Various small pieces of intricate cardboard scenery, sometimes three-dimensional, were perched on stands in front of some of the lamps, and *wayang kulit* were lying ready here and there. The gamelan instruments were squashed into the two back corners so that there was plenty of room for the dancers. Behind this area dancers prepared their costumes and intricate headdresses or finger extensions amidst crowds of people helping out and children running around enjoying the excitement.

The show lasted less than 1 hour, and not understanding the language seemed of minor importance, given the visual feast. Dancers appeared in silhouette, sometimes life-size, sometimes as giants. Four dancers might fight but the lights created a battlefield of them, constantly changing in numbers. Sometimes dancers wore headdresses of leather which made them look like giant *wayang kulit*, a new profile being cast by the leather headdress. One such character had two pieces of leather protruding from his head at 45 degrees (to the front, left, and right) so that the smallest turn of his own head enabled an instant turn of the "*wayang* head" from one side to another as if a real *wayang* were being flipped quickly to face the other way. Sometimes this "giant *wayang*" might interact with a small *wayang*, and scenery would be projected from different lamps, one at a time or in combination, sometimes tiny *wayang* appearing in the distance. Water might suddenly appear (from a lamp being shone on a mirror which had water dropped on it), or at one point a horse and chariot, bright white against solid blackness, would swerve and sway across the screen and over the ceiling, turning back and forth. Again a mirror was

used to create the effect, with a black surround fixed to it so that only the horse and chariot part of the mirror was exposed, and the mirror was flexed back and forth in the light. Dancers' arms and hands created yet more interesting effects – and all of this to the sound of Balinese gamelan. Now and again a *dalang* would perform in traditional style, and it was wonderful to see such simple technology and techniques combined with the rich inspiration of Balinese *wayang* and dance.

The last performance I want to mention (for the time being!) is a small show which took place in a venue called the Laga Pub, in Bandung. Every Monday night there is a different kind of alternative performance preceded by a discussion. On this occasion it was Ki H Sujino Tejo of Jakarta.

He started by holding up the *wayang kulit* figure of Arjuna and talking at length about Arjuna – almost as if it were himself, and connecting it with everyday life (for example, talking about how Arjuna would react if he were in a traffic jam). Later he played the *gender* (a gamelan instrument) in front of the shadow screen before going behind the screen and performing to a cassette. He used one traditional figure of Arjuna with various other modern cardboard creations of his own.

During the discussion before the show I was invited to sit at the table and join the "panel." They talked about the problem of filming *wayang* for television. One artist claimed that the *wayang* had become elitist because not many people can afford to pay the high fee which is often expected for a show, and, therefore, he said it was important that *wayang golek* should be accessible to people through television. It was generally agreed that filming for video or television is a different medium altogether. At the moment every Saturday night a *wayang* show of some kind – usually *wayang kulit* but sometimes *wayang golek* – appears on national television. On the radio a show can be heard every night – usually live. There was talk about how the camera often seems to be in the wrong place when important action happens, and therefore artists have to work toward television *wayang* being considered as a different medium, employing different techniques to film it.

The *wayangs* which appear at the moment are obviously in a stark and artificial studio and can never hope to capture the true spirit of a performance, or the atmosphere on site – even down to the tea stalls and food vendors in the surrounding streets. I told the artists there that before I left Britain, whilst working with Kabutar on *The Singing Turtle*, we once reluctantly had to send a video to a theatre which insisted on seeing some footage before securing us a booking. We sent the minimum possible – edited so that, hopefully, those who saw it would want to see more in the form of the real thing. Film will never capture the true essence of a show. It worked for us that time, and I hope that it will also work for *wayang golek* on Indonesian television!

The Java leg of Michael Palin's *Full Circle* featured a couple of minutes of *wayang kulit* in Yogyakarta. He arrived there, incidentally, via the cooler uplands of the Bandung region, with its tea plantations, where Anna is resident.

There was also, as I mentioned in the last *Bulletin*, a *wayang kulit* performance to be seen here, in the Royal Festival Hall's "Ballroom" (28 July). On a sultry evening of which Jakarta could have been proud the show, performed by Slamet Gundono, attracted a 200-strong circumnavigating audience – sometimes watching the shadows, sometimes observing the *dalang* from the opposite side of the screen. The episode from the *Mahabharata* performed takes place after the Pandawas' victory over the Kurawas and concerns accusations by Karno, the Son of the Sun, that Khresna was guilty of unfairness and trickery in the Great War (*Bharata Yudha*), for which he deserves to be severely punished. It is a highly convoluted tale of self-discovery involving zoomorphism, black magic, white magic, copious fights, wife-snatching, suicide, and running amok (almost destroying the world). All the crash-bang-wallop elements, interleaved with more reflective moments, necessary for two most agreeable hours to be passed. Accompaniment was ably provided by the South Bank Gamelan Players.

A Weekend in Preetz

John Phillips

Despite a growing interest in paper theatre and despite having attended several of Robert Poulter's festivals at Ramsgate, I wouldn't have expected to find myself in Preetz (in Schleswig Holstein) for the 10th Preetzer Papiertheatertreffen this 12 - 14 September. It is in fact Hilary who has developed an enthusiasm for paper theatre as opposed to other forms of puppetry. So there we were rushing as fast as we could through the corridors of Heathrow, as we'd been given the wrong deadline to arrive before departure. It would of course have to be the one time that the security monitor blipped and Hilary's bag had to be carefully searched before we were allowed to continue!

We made it in time, but shortly after take-off began to wish that we hadn't as one of the engines went BANG and we had to return to Heathrow on the remaining one! Everybody remained surprisingly calm with the exception of a rather large American lady who had to be sitting right in front of us! Thankfully, the Lufthansa pilot did an excellent job and we landed as though nothing untoward had happened. Some hours later we took off again – in another plane – and landed at Hamburg without incident, and then continued by train to Preetz.

We'd arrived on the Thursday evening with the intention of doing some sightseeing as the festival wasn't scheduled to start until the Friday evening at 7.00. We had heard that there was an interesting Circus Museum in Preetz, but this was, unfortunately, closed. The good news was that there was a touring exhibition of Schichtl and Winter marionettes at the City Museum in Kiel, which was fairly close, so off we set. It was well worth the trip for although I had seen a lot of Schichtl marionettes at the Munich museum and in various publications (available from Ray DaSilva), the Winter marionettes were new to me. In the event they proved to be superior to those of Schichtl, which had papier-mâché heads, whereas those of Winter were carved, but there were some very good examples of posters for the various members of the Schichtl family.

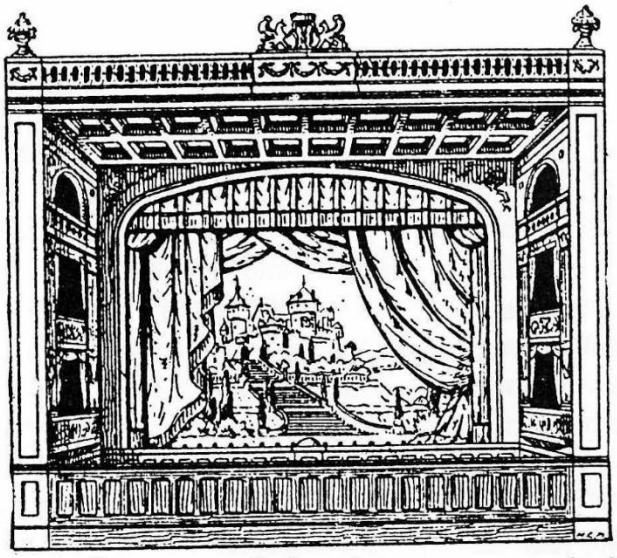
We learned that all the exhibits were on loan from the puppet museum at Lübeck and made a note to go there on the Monday, which had also been set aside for sightseeing.

It isn't always the case that England is well represented at international puppetry festivals, but on this occasion Robert Poulter, who also designed the commemorative Preetzer Theatre, complete with characters and scenery for *The Cure*, a Gothic romance, was there to perform its world premiere plus *The Great Belzoni* and *After 8½*. Brian Rogers was also there with his magnificent model theatre of Covent Garden, which was much admired. He performed *Hansel and Gretel*. Peter Baldwin was one of a number of stall-holders selling paper-theatre sheets, books etc, though not performing on this occasion, and that irrepressible duo, Peter and Sylvia Peasgood, was also in attendance. George Speaight was, unfortunately, unable to come because of an illness, from which he has now recovered.

As with any festival there were very varied levels and kinds of performance, and I was surprised to discover that there are now a number of professional paper-theatre players in Germany; yet a number of those attending were still rather defensive about the way that paper theatre was generally regarded – even in Germany.

It happened that the first performance we saw was *The Fisherman and his Wife*, presented by a professional company by the name of Invisius (Rüdiger Koch). They used original figures and sets with a large revolving stage and impressive cyclorama effects.

Hocuspocus (Barbara and Birthi Reimers) performed *The Hunchbacked Street Musician* within a fine Danish paper theatre (Petersen) with printed sets and characters. Polidor (Dirk and Barbara Reimers) later played *The White Lady* within the same theatre.



So many of the shows we saw had excellent voices with music and a variety of technical effects, including sound amplification and complicated lighting controls. The use of special sliders which enabled the figures to turn around was almost de rigueur! I calculated that some of the shows must have cost well over £1,000 to mount!

The most beautiful show of the festival for me was undoubtedly that of the Swedish company Abellis Magic Teater (Anders and Fatima Olsson) from Stockholm. They were unique in bringing their own auditorium with them. This is a large converted van with which they tour schools. You have to take your shoes off on entry to sit in a steeply raked auditorium – cosy! It provided the best viewing conditions of any and is used for a variety of puppet shows.

Anders Olsson sat in front of the stage and narrated the story *The Glassblower's Children*, though there was also dialogue, whilst his wife operated the scenery and figures. These were beautifully painted by Harald Gripe, who died three years ago, and are apparently the only set of scenery and figures he ever painted.

However attractive, traditional paper-theatre scenery rarely transcends the decorative, but these sets were imbued with the breath of art of Biedermeier and Caspar David Friedrich.

Gripe was also a collector of toy theatre stages and scenery, now held by the Gripemuseet, which is to be opened 30th November 1997. Its location, in Nykoping, is about 70km from Stockholm, and the museum's number is 46155 24 8907.

The youngest performer at the festival was Jacob Bussmann, with his Kleines Papiertheater from Hanau. Despite being only 13, he presented Tchaikovsky's Manfred Symphony – an ambitious attempt to choreograph the battle between the forces of good and evil. Unfortunately, whilst the sequence of movements had been carefully thought out, the symbolic figures did not have sufficient visual interest to sustain the performance to 36 minutes, but it was a brave attempt.

The last show we saw was a suitably jolly family affair by Theater in der Tür (Lukasz, Christian and Zaska Ratajczak) of *The Dragon of Cracow*. The audience all joined in by bursting paper bags for the explosion and waving little flags in celebration at the end.

In all there were 16 companies from six European countries with representatives from Denmark, Holland, England, Germany, Sweden and France. We were only able to see a small selection of the companies there but very much enjoyed what we saw. The whole festival was admirably organized by Dirk Reimers and Dr Jürgen Schiedeck, and, unlike many festivals, the food was excellent.

We would be able to see the British shows –and more – at the Wish Tower Festival, Eastbourne, 24 -26 October, so we concentrated on those from other countries, but regretted not being able to see the Grims Papieren Theater's (Fritz Grimmelikhuizen) Kandinsky-inspired show. He will, however, be presenting it in London during LIFT in January.

As we didn't have to catch our flight until late on the Monday we were able to break our journey and spend 5½ hours in Lübeck on the return to Hamburg. The Museum für Puppentheatergeschichte is located in five old houses within the historical Altstadt (Old Town), which is a charming maze of little lanes and medieval brick buildings. It is considered to have the

finest collection of puppets in Germany and we spent a very fascinating time looking at displays of figures from all over the world, including giant shadows from Southern India and carved figures from Mali. Germany was, of course, especially well represented, with further figures by Schichtl, Winter, Richter and Bille and more modern examples of Herbert Kramer's Figurentheater from the 1950s. I can only suggest that you visit this wonderful museum if you possibly can.

News of UNIMA Commissions

Penny Francis

It was my pleasant duty to attend the workings of three of UNIMA's development groups, otherwise known as the Professional Teaching and Training Commission, the Communications and Publications Commission and the Editorial Board of the World Encyclopedia. All were in May and June this year, on three successive weekends.

The first was held in the lovely town of Ljubljana, Slovenia, hosted by a festival of performances and schools called *Lutke 97*, with daily meetings chaired by Margareta Niculescu. Few members were present, since it was a busy time of the academic year, but those who were, worked as hard as possible to initiate a programme that would be useful to all the schools and schemes for educating would-be puppet performers and designers. The principal decision was to prepare and circulate a yearly newsletter about developments in training, to be edited in the first instance by Sergio Diotti of Italy, in time for the Charleville festival in September. It will be in English and French at least.

The Commission restated its mission, which includes the acquisition of knowledge in relation to different techniques and experiences; dedication to the changing of backward or ignorant mentalities and attitudes to puppetry, thereby to create a climate favourable to professional training via workshops and courses; encounters with people from other cultural horizons; establishment of a network; encouraging creative producers of puppet theatre to participate in programmes of training; opening the education of puppeteers to a multidisciplinary approach; international exchanges; reflection, research and the renewal of ideas through international symposia, seminars and encounters. The interest of the Commission extends to puppetry used by professionals in a non-performance context, for example, by teachers.

Mme Niculescu informed us that the last Meeting of Schools in Charleville last year had brought together 31 schools from 18 countries. She added that finding the funding for such an exercise is becoming increasingly difficult, and attendance at these events more and more expensive for the participants too. Mme Niculescu raised a phenomenal sum for the last meeting, which offered free hospitality to hundreds of participants.

At *Lutke 97* Edi Majaron was in charge of the invitations to the Schools, which included those of Jerusalem, Charleville, Wrocław, Prague (whose ex-students presented *Twelve Months* a most accomplished fairy-tale of a bullied child and her encounter with the Twelve Months, characters who help her to wreak vengeance on her tormentors), Bratislava, and "studio" work from Split and Hrvatska. As I understood, "studios" cater for students working on short production projects with tuition. The performers from the Schools were often recent graduates rather than present students, again because of the festival's timing. Most shows were mixed-media, but anchored in the animated object, which I personally was pleased to note. In addition, there was some evidence of fine manipulation in a few shows, many of which had been graduation projects by individual students, to be developed and perpetuated as professional offerings.

Of the festival's fully professional productions, the most exciting for me was by Sasha Jovanović, a Slovenian student from the first year of Charleville's Ecole Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la

Marionnette. This company, Jože Pengov, showed great sensitivity, scenographic originality and manipulation skill in a show which was truly puppet-theatre-specific. It is called *Stories from the Beehive* – referring to the unusual tradition of folk paintings found on beehives in Slovenia. It will, I am sure, be widely seen in future – certainly in the Charleville festival in September.

We heard from Edi Majaron about a two-year training course in a subdepartment of the Zagreb Academy and his hopes for the installation of a "studio" training in cooperation with the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre. UNIMA-Slovenia has problems, we learnt, and no longer has a headquarters in the Cankarjev House, where it has been based for so long. However, next year Edi hopes to organize a second festival of fledgling companies and another meeting of schools and departments of puppetry training.

The Commission would very much like to receive an invitation from Britain for a future meeting. It is certainly time we hosted such an event. Any projected festival or other occasion which would welcome the inclusion of the meetings of the Commission and thus the presence of some very distinguished world personalities and practitioners of puppet theatre – please get in touch with me.

The second Commission, deliberating on the vital matters of UNIMA's Communications and Publications, met in Liberec, in the Czech Republic, during the Mateřinka festival for young children, organised by the Naive Theatre. Our endlessly helpful host was Stanislav Doubrova. The meeting of the Commission was very well attended, with its Chair, Marek Waszkiel, newly in charge. A large amount of business was done, including resumed work on a UNIMA brochure, which should be ready very soon, for the information and use of existing and potential members of the Association.

Responsibility for the *Courrier* has reverted to the Secretary General, and, for the first time in about five years, a *Courrier* in at least two languages has reached many of the national Centres. A major project is a second edition of the "Blue Book," a guide to international UNIMA and the contemporary state of the art.

More and more Centres and members are on the Internet or have e-mail addresses, which helps speedy communication. The Charleville Institute is newly e-mailable on inst.marionnette@ardennes.com – note the two "nn's" in marionnette.

Incidentally, the Mateřinka festival – or rather the body of shows I saw there – was distinguished by all the work of the Liberec Naive Theatre under the direction of Tomáš Dvořák, and also by a life-enhancing show by two young actor-clowns wherein they turned a pile of gorgeously wrapped Christmas presents into the characters of a fairy-story. The group comes from Poland and its name is BIS. Festival directors, watch out for this show, which is called *The Shoemaker Dratvička*. Some may have seen it in Budapest last year. Highly recommended – but like most of the shows at Mateřinka, not for the youngest children.

There was a conference on the problems of puppet theatre for children, at which all the members of the Commission delivered papers. I was honoured to have mine included in the next issue of the Czech magazine *Loutkář*.

The World Encyclopedia Board

The meetings of the Board occupied four very intensive and long working days, wherein a great deal was discussed and agreed, and which left us all feeling that the aims of this Encyclopedia were not unattainable, although the problems are enormous. The Board has changed its membership, and now includes Pablo Molina from Argentina (for South America), whose knowledge about puppetry is awesome, and Hanan Kassab-Hassan of Syria for the Arab world.

I felt pleased that Britain had put in place an exemplary structure for our entries: a "receiving" centre, John Phillips, who sends on the material to a preliminary editor, me, to get the entries into shape according to the guidelines. The British UNIMA Committee will then have the opportunity to give final approval before sending the entries to Jurkowski, the Editor-in-Chief, a job no-one should envy. The pile of entries received already poses vast problems of editing, and there are still many continents and countries which have given little sign of a response to the call for entries, including some very surprising European ones. Some of the material received is most interesting, and much of it was new to members of the Board. In Charleville every entry was read and commented on, and many new guidelines established.

I hope members will feel, from this brief report of only two of the many Commissions plus the WEPA Board, that UNIMA is very busy on behalf of the puppetry world.

The Villa D'Aubilly

I have had the pleasure of staying at the Villa D'Aubilly on two occasions now, and an excellent acquisition of the Charleville Institute it is. A beautiful 18th-century building, wide and low, with a terrace and garden at the back, the Villa is a step from the School building and the Institute itself in Place Winston Churchill. It has been charmingly and comfortably refurbished, with single and double study/bedrooms with their own bathroom and a fridge and coffee/tea-making equipment. There is a huge, very well-equipped kitchen for students (a few live in the Villa on another floor), and staff and researchers to cook their own food.

The Villa is primarily for visiting tutors and those undertaking research in the extensive library, videotheque and archives of the Institute. Those interested in being awarded these unequalled facilities must apply to Margareta Niculescu with full details of the work they are undertaking.

Puppetry is very fortunate to have such a resource. Congratulations to Mme Niculescu, Jacques Félix, and everyone involved in the achievement of the Villa d'Aubilly.

Penny's tel/fax: 0171 622 5058; e-mail penny@netcomuk.co.uk

Rod Puppets & Table-Top Puppets
A Handbook of Design and Technique
by Hansjürgen Fettig
English version by Rene Baker

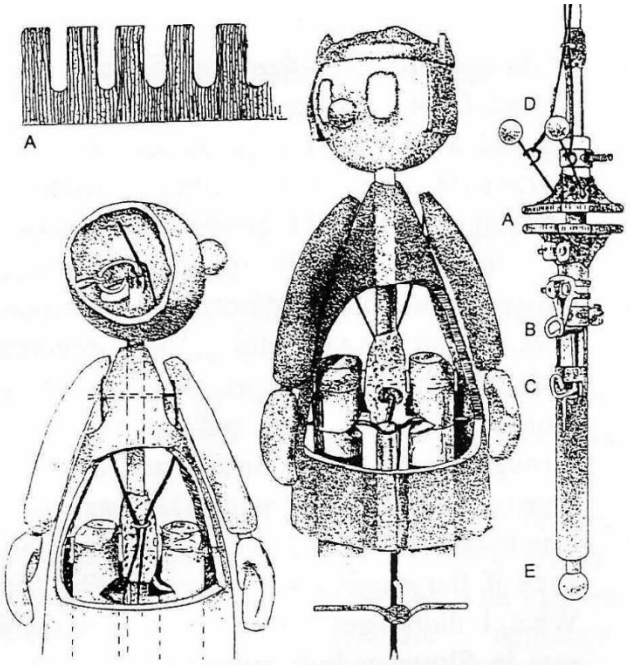
Reviewed by Ted Beresford

Those of us who already own Fettig's original book have awaited this one most eagerly. The first flick through, though, was a little disappointing. No coloured pictures and many of the others more black than white. However, this is not one for the coffee table but is a real puppeteer's book. The black backgrounds, at first tending to irritate, became pleasing when associated with the text referring, say, to light and shade.

It is not a beginner's book and will not suit those who ask questions such as the legendary, "Are there any methods of puppet-making other than *Gloy*?" Whilst it does not require an entry level of a master's degree in engineering, a basic tool-using skill is assumed. Knowledge of processes such as brazing, peening, use of the hot-air gun, etc would be useful, although not essential to get the full benefit from this volume.

With 350+ pages, 22cm x 26cm, this is a lot of book. One man's experiences and experimentation over a period of 50 years plus examples of the work of others. Full and generous acknowledgement is given to those whose puppetry runs along similar lines. The introduction contains essays by other puppeteers, including a section on Dramaturgy by Enno Podehl for those who favour the D-word.

The short autobiographical section is interesting, especially the 1939-1945 period, and indicates the wide range of skills that many of the older generation of puppeteers



achieved before becoming established. Such a change from some of the entertainers of today who decide to "add a bit of puppetry" to their repertoire.

What's new? It does contain much information from the earlier book, but there is much that is new. Working with pre-formed shapes, for me, is a winner. Card and plastic shapes to produce modernistic, stylized forms that should appeal to most puppeteers who want to break away from realism. Then there are the self-locking hip joints, the wide variety of head movements and the clever snap-strips.

Some of the mechanisms seem a little too complex but these are all part of the development of the simpler types. Any technician will tell you that it is easy to make a complicated control: the clever part is getting the same subtlety of movement with the simplest device. If you are new to this type of technical puppetry it is best not to pick a control type at random but to work through the book. Many of the later designs rely on earlier trials and so knowledge of the previous experiments, principles and processes is advisable.

Most examples of figures are humanoid, but there is an excellent section covering animal shapes – all with typical Fettig mechanisms.

Few measurements are given, but they are not necessary and can be a nuisance if our materials do not quite match those shown. However, there is the odd misprint such as 3mm for 3cm (p281) and (B) for (C) (p154), but these should cause no problems.

There is plenty of coverage of design of heads and bodies in both long- and short-rod types as well as table-top puppets. Some novel and workable stages are included, ranging from simple, one-person shows to the Full Monty for the large touring companies.

The first Fettig book is out of print and is now a highly sought after and prized collector's item. This latest one is sure to follow its predecessor and is a must for anyone who works with rod or table-top figures.

Arrangements to cover the megaevent in the Ardennes (which beat all attendance records this year) did not go altogether to plan, but, fortunately, Robin Linklater stepped in as the white knight at the last moment.

Charleville-Mézières

Robin Linklater

I had never been to this international festival before, but this year decided to make the effort, having read such great things about it in *Animations* and other publications.

I arrived on the first day, armed myself with the Programme and prepared to gormandize on foreign fare. It was a bit of a surprise to find that of the 500-plus shows for the IN (official) festival, nearly one-third were already sold out. By the end of the festival the local newspaper reported that 70,000 tickets had been sold for the IN festival (at Fr70 a ticket), 15,000 tickets were given gratis for the OFF (fringe), and I was one of 85,000 spectators, which neatly computes to one show per visitor. I bought tickets for 15 shows and saw many more free ones – either in the street or in the OFF.

I was surprised at the number of French productions, how good the good shows were and how awful the worst. Was it worth it? Well, yes. It cost me about £700

altogether, and, even if half the shows were rubbishy, the good ones worked out cheaper (each) than a trip to London. And I had a fun 10 days in a pretty French town.

For what it's worth, my prizes go to: Marionetas del Matadero for a wonderful glove show. A Spanish "version" of Punch and Judy. Very funny, lovely timing, well-designed puppets, and a good script with lots of noises (from a female swazzle). And it was free AND you got a free glass of wine. If you lumped together all the Guignol shows in the festival, you wouldn't have a tenth of this show.

Norwich's *Snow White* and Tantalus's *Seven Ages* were the only two UK shows I was able to see, but both were on my "best list." I had read reviews of *Snow White*, but *Seven Ages* I didn't know. It was in the OFF, so free, at a good venue. Performed by Rod Burnett and Tanya Landman, and owing something to Faulty Optic-style theatre. A neat little set, on which is revealed a gross baby. This baby (and I won't spoil it for those who have yet to see the show) is transformed through his remaining six stages of life, eventually returning to babyhood. Funny, frightening, touching, sad; visually surprising, so that your attention was never able to wander. It was a highly polished piece of theatre for grown-ups that could not have been made any other way. There were odd moments I felt uneasy about: the relationship of Mother to Father to Baby and how, or if, that continued through the cycle; the nature of the death of the character at the end of some of the ages – was it a real death? I thought making the character into a (cod) French sculptor was a mistake for a French audience (I could feel "waves" breaking over me), particularly as he was English all the rest of the time. But a lovely production and well received.

There was a very interesting production by the Slovenian Konj Puppet Theatre of *Don Juan*, a version of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The set was black playboard and screen, with curtained windows and tiny central inner stage. It was performed with grotesque, half-life-size rod figures, which moved from one location to another on the set and also appeared in miniature form as marionettes in the centre (sometimes simultaneously). The production was not at all romantic, which made the struggle between the Commendatore and Don Juan a purely personal vendetta. Very interesting and a splendid climax as you actually saw Don Juan being torn out of this world, through the miniature theatre and down into a secret bottom stage, where he was roasted. The music was performed live and very well, even if the singing was occasionally "iffy." What I didn't get was the dialogue, which was in Slovene, but, apparently, brutal and funny – and worth translating.

There was a lovely piece by an uncredited Mr Smoothy of Bululu Theatre, from Paris. Very polished and almost a demonstration of different puppet styles – hand, glove, rod, and Bunraku. Maybe not deep, thought-provoking stuff, but beautifully performed.

The Bulgarian Credo Theatre performed *Le Manteau*. Bravura performance by a husband and wife, a bundle of sticks, and some tatty cardboard, which was pure magic and fantasy.

But my magician had to be the guy with the effortless patter selling jig dolls, at Fr30 each, in the street (the secret's in the packet). I watched him a number of times and still don't know how he did it. (And actually I prefer not to know.)

There was masses of street theatre, much of it tripe, but some – Papilu of Slovenia, with a paper show for children, and Tof Theatre's Le Roi de la Frite – to (unfairly) pick but two were as good as shows on the IN.

I was underwhelmed by Eric Bass and Sandglass Theater's *Never Been Anywhere*. Several shows I saw were just incomprehensible: Loja e Kohrane's *Jeu des Temps*, Sigrid Gassler's *Yatar Yatar*. I couldn't understand why they were performing to the public, let alone what it was all about. Some productions seemed to

be for children who would like gameshows when they grow up: Nikolay Zykov's *The Touch to the Miracle* (sic), most of the Guignol shows, and Théâtre d'or. I was endlessly amazed at the acres of French schoolchildren polishing the pavements with their bottoms, who would refrain from throwing squishy objects at either boring events like the mechanical clock outside the Institute or ghastly violin puppets performing to ghetto blasters. But the good outweighed the bad by a long way.

Manipulation

A French news agency report on Charleville by Sylvain Dubus on the last day of the festival (28 September) included an interview with Jacques Félix. The topic is far from new, but it struck your editor that it was worth translating a few lines of it.

"The point of departure for the internationalization of the festival coincided, in 1972, with the organization of the 11th UNIMA Congress, while the great revolution as far as manipulation is concerned occurred in 1976 with the revealing to the general public of the puppeteers, who had hitherto remained hidden in their booths, Jacques Félix explained.

"I do not regret this evolution, which allows the spectators to discover all the puppeteer's secrets, but I am worried about the increasingly small place left to the puppet in the new shows,' the alert septuagenarian added. 'In future we will carry out a more rigorous selection procedure, because it is a pity that the puppet is relegated to a minor role by the puppeteer who wishes to highlight his qualities as an actor,' he said.

"In this context Philippe Genty's latest show, *Dédales*, described as 'alternative theatre' by Jacques Félix, received a mixed reception, while, for different reasons, particularly cultural ones, the five Japanese companies (two of them Bunraku), which were guests of honour, seemed 'disconcerting' in certain ways to spectators, 40 percent of whom came from the Champagne-Ardennes region. 'However, the Dondoro Theatre, which performed out in Reims (Marne), was a big hit because the illusion is such that the audience is no longer able to tell the manipulated from the manipulator,' he said.

"We hope to feature among the official events celebrating the year 2000, as we are planning to erect – along world-fair lines – pavilions honouring the great nations like Japan, China, India, Indonesia, or France which have made the history of puppetry."

The next *Bulletin* will contain a full report on the two puppetry and therapy seminars at Charleville.

FESTIVAL BRIEFS

Huamantla

Mickey Aronoff informs me she had a wonderful time in Mexico in August, attending, among other things, the week-long international puppetry festival sponsored by the Museo Internacional del Títere, Huamantla, which is now "under new management." There were participants from Galicia, many parts of Mexico, Cuba, Vietnam ("an incredible 18-member troupe"), and the United States (Mickey gave a lecture and workshops).

Toledo

Mickey also attended, in July, the seven-day festival of the Puppeteers of America, to which she has now been appointed therapy consultant. It was a successful, packed event, including performances, workshops, meetings, exhibitions etc, which had participants running around like characters in old-time movies from 8.30 am to 1.00 pm daily. She writes: "The hit of the festival was the Spanish group, Los Titiriteros de Binéfar, which performed *La Fabula de la Raposa*, an incredibly well-observed and well-manipulated piece with universal themes, portrayed in an intelligent and sensitive manner. There was not a dry eye in the house after seeing this moving, well-fleshed-out story of *The Fox and the Crow*, based on Aesop and text from the Middle Ages. Those who are going to Charleville-

Mézières will have the opportunity to see them with a different production. David Simpich's *Christmas Carol* was another popular favourite."

Ghent

More than 25,000 people saw the performances which Freek Neirynck selected for this summer's puppet festival, held during the general city festival Gentse Feesten. The jury awarded the Luk Vincent Prize to Hungarian puppeteer András Lenart of Mikropodium for his masterly manipulation (his skill was also much appreciated by many, including me, at the UNIMA festival in Budapest last year). The Dutch puppeteer Jaap Slagman also received a nomination.

Companies wishing to take part in Figeuro 98 (European countries) in Gent, next July, should apply to Europees Figurenteater Centrum, Trommelstraat, 9000 Gent, Belgium.

Tantalus –Zagreb Prizewinner

Tantalus Theatre (Rod Burnett and Tanya Landman), a newly created company designed to "produce work for adult audiences," won the prize for best animation at this August's 30th PIF (International Puppet Theatre Festival) in Zagreb with *Seven Ages*. This highly visual piece, with virtually no spoken language, "takes Shakespeare's 'all the world's a stage' speech as the departure point, and explores (with sometimes offbeat humour) the seven stages of man's development. An actor figure is the central character, who uses a system of disguise to metamorphose into characters from the cradle to the grave. On a strange wooden set, the audience finds themselves watching a 'stage' within a 'stage'...." Thirty companies, selected from 119 applications from 34 countries, participated in the efficiently organized festival, where the welcome was "tremendously warm," according to the company members.

The show also went down very well in Charleville-Mézières, garnering enthusiastic applause and invitations to lots of festivals (see Robin Linklater's Charleville roundup). Its last UK outing was at The Little Angel 17 October. If you missed that, you will have to wait until next April ("I'm pregnant and will soon be too big to reach the puppets!" – Tanya).

Internet

Sorry that the Guild (Michael Dixon, July Guild *Newsletter*) should have failed to turn us up on the Net. We were and are still queuing for a place on The Puppetry Home Page (typing this in will get you straight through – at least on infoseek). Ted Beresford's collaborative site is still having teething problems.

Housekeeping

Ideally, copy should be cleanly typed and **not double spaced**. If produced on a word processor rather than typewriter it is far more likely to scan, otherwise it has to be retyped. However, whatever your "technology," do pop it in the post. A propos of illustrations, it is impossible for us to do justice to photographs, but line drawings can be easily reproduced. (There are, for example, some fine photographs of *Wayang Listrik*, from Anna, which we are unable to use, although photographs of Pak Sukasman did appear in *Animations* No 6.)

The **deadline** for the next *Newsletter* is **15 December**, for the *Bulletin* **1 February.**

British Centre of Union Internationale de la Marionnette
Hon President: John Blundall Chair: Ray DaSilva Vice Chair: Glyn Edwards
General Secretary: Lorraine von Gehlen, Cross Border Arts, Wysing Arts Centre, Fox Road, Bourn, Cambridge CB3 7TX. Tel 01954 718181 email lorraine@cba.eastern-arts.couk
Membership Secretary & Treasurer: John Phillips, 140 Barnsbury Road, London N10ER Tel 0171 8334408
Editor of Bulletin: Robert Fowler, 44 Bexley Court, Reading, Berks. RG30 2DY Tel 01189 576528
e-mail: rfowler@ldbureau.co.uk